

his training did not prepare him for what he had to endure next. On April 16, 1966, SAM's F-4 was shot down over North Vietnam. It took only seconds for the enemy to capture SAM, but it took nearly seven years for SAM to see his wife, three children and his home again.

The enemy tried to break SAM JOHNSON on numerous occasions, but SAM was unbreakable. His faith in God and his strong will to live enabled him to survive. SAM was an officer, a leader, and a teacher. He would secretly communicate with the new prisoners that were brought into Hanoi, teaching them how to survive. These were the qualities of a true leader, risking his life to protect his fellow man.

SAM JOHNSON is a fighter. He fought for his country, his family and his faith. As a member of Congress, SAM valiantly wages this fight today—for all of us.

Today we honor the heroes who endured the horrible pain and suffering as prisoners of war. Today is a celebration of SAM JOHNSON's strength and courage. He demonstrated an unflinching devotion to duty, honor, and country. Let us commemorate SAM and all American POWs for their courage and determination in upholding the principles of freedom and democracy.

“EQUALITY FOR ISRAEL AT THE UNITED NATIONS ACT OF 1998”

**HON. STEVE R. ROTHMAN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 12, 1998*

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the “The Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act of 1998.” With the strong support of over 60 original co-sponsors, including both the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee, this bill seeks an end to the institutional discrimination Israel has faced at the United Nations for far too long.

Specifically, this bill requires that the Secretary of State report on actions taken by our Ambassador to the United Nations to encourage the nations of the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) to accept Israel into their group.

The bill also calls on the Secretary of State to solicit and receive responses from each of the nations of WEOG on their position concerning Israel's acceptance into their organization. In this manner, Congress can know which nations are supporting Israel's admittance to WEOG and which nations are opposed.

As many of my colleagues are already aware, the State of Israel has been a member of the UN since 1949. But what my colleagues and the American public might not know is that Israel is the only long-standing member of the United Nations to be denied acceptance into any of the organization's five regional blocs.

Membership in a regional bloc is critical because it is a prerequisite for any nation to serve on the powerful Security Council or other key U.N. bodies such as the Economic and Social Council. Due to its exclusion from a regional bloc at the United Nations, the State of Israel has been precluded from fully participating in the workings of that world body.

This amounts to institutional discrimination against Israel at the United Nations.

The real story here is two-fold: On the one hand there are Arab states who have denied Israel the consensus vote it needs to join its natural, geographic, regional bloc—the Asian bloc. On the other hand, there are the member states of the Western Europe and Others Group, otherwise known as the WEOG regional bloc, who have failed to embrace Israel's request to temporarily join their grouping.

This is where the United States must step up and show true leadership. And this is why I have introduced “The Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act of 1998.”

WEOG, to which the U.S. belongs, is one of the five regional blocs at the United Nations. Other non-European countries: Western-style democracies such as Canada and Australia already belong to the WEOG. Israel would be a perfect fit, at least temporarily.

The issue is not whether Israel deserves to be treated as an equal among nations, it surely does. The challenge is how to achieve equality at the United Nations. World-wide recognition of Israel as an equal at the United Nations would be the right message to send now to help advance the struggling Middle East peace process.

But this is not just an Israel issue, this is a United Nations issue. And clearly, Israel's acceptance into the WEOG would be a welcome sign of real reform taking place at the United Nations.

There already has been a groundswell of support in the U.S. Congress for this issue. Seventy-six Members of Congress, many of whom serve on the House International Relations Committee, joined me and Representative ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN last year in sending letters to the member states of the WEOG, asking them to allow Israel to join the WEOG as a temporary member.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and our Ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, both agree that this issue needs to be pursued. In fact, Ambassador Richardson told me personally that he will work to “re-dedicate U.S. efforts on this issue.”

Supporting Israel's right to be a full member of the United Nations is the right thing to do. We owe no less to Israel, a strong U.S. ally, and to the United Nations, whose credibility is threatened if all countries are not treated as equals.

For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to lend their support for “The Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act of 1998.”

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

**HON. NICK LAMPSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 12, 1998*

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I recognize a native of Port Arthur, Texas who has gone forth into the world and become a legend in the world of art. Robert Rauschenberg is the first American to win the prestigious Venice Biennale Grant Prize, as well as the first living American artist to have his work published on the cover of Time Magazine. In a career that has spanned

the latter half of this century, Robert Rauschenberg's groundbreaking work has been included in the most prestigious collections and won awards around the world.

Robert has used his artistic voice to benefit humanitarian causes. He created the first Earth Day poster in 1970. In 1990, he established the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation to promote medical research, education, the environment, and to aid the hungry and homeless in the United States and across the globe.

This weekend, Robert Rauschenberg will be honored in Houston for the greatness of his life's work. Though Robert left Port Arthur to seek his fortune in the world, he is a symbol of the greatness that lurks within each child. A child who grows up among oil refineries became one of the most important artists of his generation. He is a native of our area and we are duly proud, but we know that Robert Rauschenberg, through his work, belongs to the world and to the ages.

TRIBUTE TO LEVI PEARSON

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 12, 1998*

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Black History Month to pay tribute to a true pioneer, Levi Pearson. As today is the 89th anniversary of the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, I should note that he was President of the Clarendon County, SC, branch of the NAACP. However, it is the work he did as an ordinary citizen from a small county in South Carolina for which he should be remembered.

Last week, I paid tribute to the 20 plaintiffs of *Briggs v. Elliott*. Those plaintiffs were the foundation on which the case of *Brown v. Education of Topeka* was based that eventually won the battle of public, desegregated education in our nation. Today, I pay tribute to the man who took the first courageous step on that very long road.

In 1947, the search was on in Clarendon County for a parent who had the courage to test the legality of the discriminatory bus transportation practices that were the norm. Pearson had three children who attended Scotts Branch school nine miles from their home with no public transportation. On July 28, he signed a petition asking that “school bus transportation be furnished, maintained and operated out of public funds in School District Number 26 of Clarendon County South Carolina for use of the said children of your Petitioner and other Negro school children similarly situated.” The petition was submitted to the local school board chairman and the secretary of the State Board of Education by the Reverend Mr. Joseph Albert DeLaine, a prominent Clarendon County schoolteacher. No response was given.

After 8 months of silence, Pearson's attorneys filed a brief in the United States District Court. In the brief, they cited the “irreparable damage” Pearson's children suffered from being denied the free bus service to which white children were entitled. The case was dismissed saying Pearson has no legal standing because his farm straddled the line between the school district where he lived and where his children went to school.